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THE PAMELA SMART STORY

By Barbara Carton
GLOBE STAFF

Pamela Smart stalks in and out of a New Hampshire courtroom each day, a petite woman with wavy brown hair and heels that are a little too high, her chin thrust stubbornly forward, eyes dry, nails polished, a crucifix around her neck. She is demure, dressed in TV colors: pink and purple.

Behind this facade lurk two selves. One is the Pamela Smart portrayed by her enemies: cunning, manipulative and exploitative, a 23-year-old who *appears* normal, but whose narcissism and cold-bloodedness made her the brains behind the murder of Gregory Smart, her insurance agent husband.

The other is the Pamela Smart who appears in the dusty pages of her high school yearbook: a popular former cheerleader and honors student who cruises country roads in her silver Honda CRX and blasts heavy metal music — an immature girl, maybe, but one incapable of treachery or evil.

Today, Pamela Smart's fate hangs in the balance as the jury in her murder-conspiracy and murder-accomplice case weighs one of her alleged selves against the other. Did she adore her young husband, or was she so deceitful that she donned turquoise lingerie and stripteased to Van Halen's "Black and Blue" to seduce her scraggly-haired 15-year-old lover?

Is she the nice girl who grew up in relative affluence and dreamed of a glittering career as a media star, like Barbara Walters? Or is she the Pamela Smart who hung out in a deadbeat teenage world where people didn't talk about goals, but about Kenwood truck speakers and Motley Crue's latest hit?

Her story, paradoxical as it seems, begins in Florida, where she

Friends see
a cute charmer;
others say she
used that charm
to kill



PHOTO VIA AP
Pamela Smart in court, top, and with
husband Gregory on their wedding day.

spent her early years as the second of two children born to John Wojas, a Delta Airlines captain, and his wife, Linda.

They lived in Miami then, about 13 miles south of downtown, in a stucco ranch house in a calm, professional neighborhood in the Pinecrest-Palmetto area.

It's the kind of place that could be anywhere USA: a stretch of urban suburbia that was developed in the 1960s and has since evolved into a settled community of homes on a half acre to an acre, many with back-yard swimming pools. Little could the neighbors guess that the little girl next door would one day be the star defendant in a sensational murder trial.

"She was an absolutely bright, extremely responsible, ethical, drug-free ...," said a Florida woman who knows the family. "This is not a situation where you can say she had a 'problem' once and — no, none, *never*."

In fact, in a 1970s era of permissiveness, Pamela's family seemed to be unusually — *refreshingly* — disciplined. "They were," the Florida woman said, "a real family."

Smart went through the local public schools, including F.C. Martin for sixth grade, then on to Palmetto Junior High, a huge regional facility.

"She was friendly, happy," said Keith Markowitz, who was at Palmetto with her. "She was a typical junior high school student: popular, but not overly popular. Not the prom queen, but certainly included in a circle of friends."

When Pamela was in eighth grade, her family sold the ranch house and moved to New Hampshire in an effort, friends say, to escape Miami's rising crime rate. They settled in Windham, a white-collar community east of Nashua, where they purchased a

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wooden ranch house near Canobie Lake and enrolled Pamela at the Windham Center School.

After one year, she transferred to Pinkerton Academy in Derry, where she was known by her nicknames, "Pame" and "Wojo," a play on her last name Wojas. She was an honor roll student for four years, a homeroom representative, a varsity basketball and football cheerleader and a volunteer Spanish tutor, and she was active in Students Against Drunk Driving and involved with the school's Winter Carnival.

"Extremely energetic, very involved and always smiling," is how Lara Chulack, her Pinkerton cheerleading partner, remembers her.

Pamela "always portrayed herself as very put together," a girl who was part of the popular crowd but "didn't snub anybody" and "always wanted to be in the limelight, most definitely," Chulack added.

"Everyone wanted to be close to her," Chulack continued. "I guess they felt that some of her power would rub off on them."

"We didn't have those 'Most Likely to Succeed' things in high school, but if we did Pam would have won it. Everyone had the same perception."

Chulack and others said that there were times when Pamela was manipulative at getting what she wanted, but that she never hurt anyone in the process. Others say, sarcastically, that's because Pamela was always extraordinarily concerned about the image she projected.

For at least part of the time at Pinkerton, Smart dated Paul Reis, a co-captain of the Pinkerton football team, whose high school nickname was "Sausage," and who listed in his yearbook his life's pursuit: to become an emergency medical technician.

Her pursuit, she wrote, was to "dance the night away with David Lee Roth," who, at the time, was lead singer with Van Halen, the heavy metal rock group.

But Pamela also talked to friends about returning to Florida - to "Gatorland USA." And, after graduating from Pinkerton in 1985, she enrolled at Florida State University in Tallahassee, along with several friends from her class at Pinkerton, including Karen Sue Cizmada.

At FSU, she majored in media performance, graduated cum laude in three years and worked in several jobs, including as a news intern for the local CBS-TV affiliate, WCTV, and as an errand girl at the Florida

State Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis.

She also worked as promotions director and as a heavy metal disc jockey for her college radio station, WVFS-FM. In fact, it was Pamela's idea to start the show, which she called "Metal Madness," and to bill herself as the "Maiden of Metal."

Cizmada, who roomed freshman year with her in a university dorm, says Smart initially became involved with the station because she hoped it would help further her career goals of broadcast journalism.

Other college friends say that while Smart preferred top 40 metal, she often played other groups, including Stryper, the Christian heavy metal band.

"Pame wasn't sitting down and playing heavy metal records backwards and taking down messages, I promise you," said Markowitz, a friend from Miami, who also attended FSU.

But she did love her show. It ran one night a week, from 10 p.m. to midnight, and she always signed on with: "You're listening to the Maiden of Metal on Metal Madness, on V-89."

The music she played was loud, but mainstream. Her preferred groups at the time were Aerosmith, Iron Maiden, Queensryche and her favorite, Van Halen.

"These are bands that you'd have no problem giving as presents to your niece," said Michael Rittberg, a college friend who now works as manager/national radio promotions for Metal Blade Records, a record company.

Spencer Kuvin, an FSU student who knew her from his work at the radio station, agrees. "I hate to say she used to hang around with a metal crowd and the long-hair crowd, but of course a lot of her friends were interested in metal music, so it was that kind of crowd."

"But," he added, "we're talking college people. We're talking middle class."

Pamela's looks, friends said, haven't changed - the wavy brown hair with sort of a moussed look to it, fluffed in front. She wasn't into classic prep, but she didn't wear metal studs, either. It was more the jeans-and-blouse look.

She was, her friends said, a "getter" and managed to organize several events, including a large benefit at a local American Legion Hall to promote safe sex, and arranged for several area bands - Hooker, All the Way, Nuisance - to play free of charge.

And, during her junior year, she

acquired a steady boyfriend: Gregg Smart, a New Hampshire boy whom she had met during a holiday break at a New Year's Eve party held at his parents' house - and decided to pursue.

Gregg Smart, who hadn't gone to college, was at the time an assembler of heavy equipment truck booms, such as those used on telephone trucks, for Consolidated Utility Equipment Services in the nearby town of Amherst.

The couple started a commuting relationship, the distance between New Hampshire and Florida softened by virtue of Pamela's father's job with Delta. She'd come up about once a month, and they'd go skiing or party with friends from high school.

Soon, however, Gregg decided to move to Tallahassee to be with her while she finished college. He quit his job at CUES, and his parents, William and Judith Smart, helped him drive south, following behind his Mercury Cougar in their little Toyota.

Gregg's mother even bought him dishes, curtains, silverware - all the things she thought he'd need to equip the first apartment that he planned to rent in what Judith Smart said in a recent interview appeared to her to be a refurbished motel complex.

From the start, Gregg did not like Florida - he told friends it was too hot, and he missed downhill skiing - but he stayed because of Pamela. And they shared an interest in music and often went to local clubs, including the Warehouse, which sponsored periodic heavy metal concerts.

They also hung out a lot with another couple whom they had met at a Motley Crue concert: John Robertson, a computer programmer and owner of Re-drum Productions, a concert promotion company, and Robertson's then-girlfriend. Often, the foursome would get tickets to a concert like the "Monsters of Rock" heavy metal concert held in June 1988 at the Tampa Stadium, to which 36,000 people went to hear Van Halen, the headline band, alongside Metallica, Scorpions, Dokken and Kingdom Come.

Pamela, because of her job at the university radio station, secured backstage passes and got to meet guitarist Eddie Van Halen and have her picture taken with him.

"She was pretty excited about it," said Robertson. "It was pretty cool. But, you know, the music didn't really play a big important role in their relationship, or in our relationship

with them."

Sometimes, the foursome would just get together for Saturday evenings, cook a meal and maybe watch a comedy on the VCR. And like everyone else who knew Pamela and Gregg in Florida, Robertson remembers them as a close couple.

"Pam and Gregg always had the perfect relationship," Robertson said. In fact, Robertson added, when his own four-year romance suddenly broke up, he turned to Pamela for counseling on "how to deal with it" because "she always had real good advice."

"Pam was very grown up for her age," agreed Debra Keeney, who roomed with Pamela and Gregg in an off-campus apartment during Pamela's last year at FSU.

Friends said the two were often generous with each other. For graduation, for example, Gregg surprised Pamela with a tiny brown-and-white Shih Tzu dog, which she named Halen, after the rock group. It was a breed she had always admired, but the cost of a pedigreed puppy had always been out of her reach, Keeney said.

After Pamela told Keeney that she and Gregg were looking for roommates, the trio searched the real estate listings for several weeks before settling on a two-bedroom quadruplex with a deck, in a complex known as Castle Apartments, about 2½ miles from the FSU campus, just off the truck route that rings downtown Tallahassee.

"It was the best living situation I've ever had," said Keeney. "It was like we had a family there. If something was happening to me, I was as good a friend of Gregg's that I could talk to him, or to Pam."

Their schedules, however, were extremely hectic. Gregg had taken a job with a landscaping crew and was also studying to pass an insurance sales exam.

Gregg told Keeney that his father, William, was an insurance sales rep, and that he wanted to join the business, too. "This was going to be like a stepping stone for him," Keeney said.

And Pamela had her schoolwork, her radio show, the internship at the TV station and the job at the state Department of Commerce, where Keeney was a statistician.

"She worked a lot on the weekends," said Keeney, "and when they did have spare time, they'd go to New Hampshire and go skiing."

It was during that year that

Gregg confessed to Keeney that he wanted to ask Pamela to marry him. He told Keeney that he wasn't making much money as a landscaper, but that he was slowly trying to sock some away to pay for a diamond solitaire.

"He was so excited," Keeney said.

In January 1988, Pamela and Gregg became engaged. They spent another half-year in Florida, and after she graduated with a 3.85 average, they moved back to New Hampshire. Gregg, especially, felt it was time to go home.

When they returned, Pamela seemed unchanged to her old New Hampshire friends, while Gregg seemed to have mellowed out. He was still interested in metal music, but was especially focused on becoming a successful insurance salesman.

"Everyone has their time to grow up, and that was his time," said Steven Payment, a friend of the couple.

Gregg found work with Metropolitan Life Insurance, the same Nashua firm that his father worked for. Pamela, meanwhile, took a job as a media coordinator at Winnacunnet High School in Hampton.

A short time afterward, friends say, she got a call from a Florida TV station, asking if she'd be interested in trying out for a job as a starting reporter.

"She always wanted to be a broadcaster," Keeney said. "Her major was communications, and she loved the spotlight. She loved being in front of a camera because she was pretty - she didn't know she was pretty - but she knew how to speak real well."

But Pamela put aside her ambition and decided to remain with her fiancé in New Hampshire. "It was because she loved Gregg so much, and that was the truth," said Keeney.

The couple married in May 1989 at Sacred Heart Church in Lowell, followed by a big reception at the Pelham Inn, a function hall.

They then settled into a rented condo at 4E Misty Morning Drive in Derry, nestled in a beige clapboard cluster behind the concrete expanse of the Hood Commons Mall, with its Fashion Bug, Papa Gino's and Super Shaw's stores.

But about seven months after their wedding - some five months before Gregg Smart's body was found sprawled on the floor of the condo - his parents noticed, they said in a recent interview, that the newlyweds weren't spending as much time together.

Gregg was always off in his Toyota truck, they said, or he'd disappear on Saturdays into the woods with his friends, riding his Suzuki four-wheeler on the trails that lead from Windham Depot.

Or he'd go into Boston and listen to music played by friends who belonged to relatively unknown local bands - N.E. Rocks, say, or Sugar Daddies - that would play at places like Narcissus, Paradise or the Channel. Sometimes he'd go off with his friends, skiing in Canada.

"I hate to say this," his mother, Judith, recalled confiding to his father in January 1990, "but something's not right. They just got married, and already they're spending their weekends apart?"

There were other things, too, that bothered the Smarts about their son's relationship. Gregg wanted children, they said, while Pamela didn't. He put a down payment on a new house, a contemporary ranch; she wouldn't move.

But the couple's friends say they never heard Gregg and Pamela discuss marital problems. Keeney, for one, is scornful of published reports that Pamela's infatuation with Gregg ended when he lopped off his long hair and no longer resembled Jon Bon Jovi, the rock star.

"They just seemed like any normal newly married couple," said Tom Parilla, the best man at their wedding. "I mean, the times are tough now, and problems occur, but they dealt with their problems just like everybody else did."

"They had arguments," agreed Payment, "but it was over silly things, nothing major. It was hard to stay mad at Gregg, because he'd always give in. It seemed like they had a good relationship."

Gregg's murder occurred only six days before the couple's first anniversary. Friends say he had planned to throw a big party and had made arrangements to take Pamela to Florida, to celebrate his having been named Metropolitan Life's regional "Rookie of the Year."

Pamela was arrested in August, accused of luring three Seabrook teen-agers, including her former 15-year-old lover William Flynn, into killing her husband. Her alleged involvement has made the intervening months nightmarish both for her parents and for his.

The Wojases see the Pamela that is cute, popular, bubbly, the cheerleader and honors student who would one day become a famous TV star - but not one on trial for murder.

The Smarts see a cold, calculating woman who plotted their son's murder and then sent his belongings - including his shoes and his favorite Trump Plaza baseball cap - back to them in plastic trash bags.

Whatever the verdict, Judith Smart says that her mind is already made up. "It took me a long time to come to the conclusion, but I finally realized, she was two different people."